



# *the* ANTI-HUNGER ADVOCATE

Brought to you by the Anti-Hunger Action Committee

January 2005

## REPRESENTATIVE SPONSORING MEDICAID BILLS MEETS WITH AHAC



Representative Steven Mascaro and Senator Paula Julander attended the December 28 meeting of AHAC's Medicaid Action Group. Representative Mascaro is sponsoring bills to restore vision and dental benefits to Medicaid. Both Senator Julander and Representative Mascaro provided members with good advice for working to get these important bills passed. "I was grateful that a Senator and a Representative came," said Connie Bell. "I learned a lot of things during the meeting."

### February 16 is Medicaid Day at the Capitol!

During this year's six week legislative session AHAC will be going to the hill every **Wednesday**, starting January 19. The most important Wednesday of them all is February 16, which will be the Utah Poverty Partnership's Medicaid Day. Please invite your friends and family to come with us educate legislators about how important Medicaid is!

### ENROLL YOUR KIDS IN CHIP!

January 10-25 is open enrollment for the Children's Health Insurance Program. Call 1-877-KIDS-NOW for more information!



### Third Annual "All I Want for Christmas" Sing Along:

On December 22, in front of the Governor's Mansion, two dozen AHAC members and people from other groups gathered to sing carols. **Above:** Donna and Darla speak with a radio interviewer about getting dental and vision benefits restored to Medicaid. **On the left:** Jack, Chris and Rudy line up on South Temple to show signs to passing drivers.



# The Golden Rule: A Call For Unity *by Chris Atkins*

While there are many different faiths at work in the great state of Utah, many different organizations have come together to make a statement concerning a common belief in the "Golden Rule". This rule more than implies we are "our brother's keeper" and that as we keep him we keep ourselves. Having come together at the "Poverty Summit", groups such as AHAC, DRAC and representatives from the United Church of Christ and the Episcopal Church have stated this common belief in a supposition titled, "DECLARATION OF DUTY TO OUR NEIGHBORS". This coalition of groups have obviously set the standard and shown that this "Golden Rule" is really about "unity". One for all and all for one!

During the American Revolutionary War the call to arms was overall a call to unity. Lets look at what cause we want to come together for-- the state Legislators voted in 2002 to rescind monies and not provide dental and vision benefits to the elderly and people with disabilities that depend on Medicaid funding! These people were left to fend for themselves until 2002 when a very small amount of money was pulled from the state coffers as a token. Benefits remain drastically cut with some services still not provided to these "sacrificial lambs". To justify this neglect the words "there is not enough money" are heard from the State Capitol.

In 2001 there was a similar call by fellow Utahns. It was the call to "ALLIANCE FOR UNITY". This declaration stated

- That unity in Utah today is not of the scope or level it ought to be.
- That we should support opportunities for people with difference to understand and appreciate one another.
- That we should have a commitment to making Utah a place where diverse people work together to solve community problems.

This statement was signed not only by the Religious Community but by people such as Jon M. Huntsman, Mayor Rocky Anderson, and Norma Matheson who represented the Political Community. The signal from the Political Community seemed to be that they understood their moral and civic duty. The vote by the State Legislature in 2002 proved that was not the case. The proverbial "rug" was pulled right out from underneath those that needed help the most.

I can ask just about anyone in the neighborhoods if they think we have a responsibility to take care of the elderly and people with disabilities and their answer would be, "of course". Look at the voting records of legislators/politicians and it is clear that their friends and lobbyists have the front row seat. Those that can't fend for themselves or are beyond their productive years are at the back of the bus. Can we be so cynical and apathetic that we allow the golden rule to be "those that have the gold make the rules"? Should legislators be require by us, the community, to live and work according to the Golden Rule?

Governor-Elect Jon Huntsman Jr. noted in his campaign for election that the needs concerning Medicaid Dental and Vision benefits might be partially met by the private sector. He was quick to see that no one person, group or entity can be solely responsible to meet the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities. I agree. However, this burden and privilege should rest on our Legislators as well. We know where that duty and honor was in 2002 because of the recorded vote. Today the "million dollar question" is whether or not it's business as usual or whether there is change on the horizon. Do our Legislators care enough today? The bottom line is that the elderly and people with disabilities are our children, mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers who depend on us. The moral responsibility here is like the proverbial apple that cannot fall very far from the tree. Our legislators can and they must find a better answer than, "**There's not enough money.**"

## Declaration of Duty to Our Neighbors

As Utahns of many faiths we share belief in the Golden Rule  
"Do to others as you would have them do to you."

In this spirit of compassion and justice we all have a duty to ensure our neighbors:

- Do not suffer from hunger.
- Have access to safe, decent, accessible and affordable housing.
- Receive basic, quality health, vision, dental and mental health care.
- Are economically secure according to their needs and their ability to support themselves.

Further, we believe it is incumbent on all Utah society -- public and private, church and state -- to ensure the same.

This Declaration of Duties is a values statement for the Utah Poverty Partnership, a new network of community groups that includes AHAC. Should our elected officials follow the Golden Rule?

In this season of lights  
 We are encompassed by joy & bliss,  
 Sounds of happiness echo around every corner  
 The smells of succulent dishes fill the air  
 Smiles are shown with frequency  
 The winter air is so cold it bites.  
 And we are comfortable  
 We don't notice those who are down on their luck  
 These are the ones who are going without  
 They have an ache in their bellies  
 And are utterly frozen  
 Searching for someone to lend support  
 Think of the true meaning of Christmas,  
 Celebrating the birth of Jesus  
 By giving from our hearts  
 We give gifts to warm the spirits of all those around us  
 Look deep inside your soul  
 Act upon these feelings  
 It is all about giving.  
 So give with all your heart  
 To everyone you know  
 It can be a nice compliment  
 Or a genuine smile.  
 A gesture of kindness  
 Then you will notice  
 The warmth that fills you too.

*Vince Lobato 12/16/2004*

## Jokes of the Month

**by: Douglas Cotant**

Know why Santa Claus  
 has three flower gardens?

So he can Ho! Ho! Ho!

What do you call a cat in the sand?

Sandy Claus!



Having troubles with your food stamps?

**Come meet with the Downtown  
 and Metro DWS Office Managers.  
 Tell them your problems and ask  
 them questions.**

January 4, 5:30 pm  
 Crossroads Urban Center  
 347 South 400 East  
 Questions?  
 Call Elizabeth at 364.7765

## AHAC Upcoming Events Calendar:

**Tuesday, January 4 at 5:30: Food Stamp Action Group Meeting.** This month we will have the managers of both the Downtown DWS office and the Metro DWS office - make sure to come join us and voice your opinion!

**Tuesday, January 11 at 5:30: Newsletter Committee.** We need writers, photographers illustrators and cartoonist to help make our newsletter more creative.

**Monday, January 17: Legislative Session Begins!**

**Tuesday, January 18 at 5:30: Fair Jobs Action Group Meeting.** We'll be making plans to promote jobs that pay decent wages with health insurance in Salt Lake County.

**Wednesday, January 19: Housing Day at the Legislature.** This is a chance to tell legislators about the need for affordable housing.

**Tuesday, January 25 at 5:30: Medicaid Action Group Meeting.** Here, we'll be strategizing and discussing how to get dental and vision benefits restored to Medicaid.

**Monday, January 31 8am to 1pm: Citizen's Day at the Prime Hotel.** Call Robyn Lipkowitz at Utah Issues, 521-2035 ex. 107, for more information.

**Wednesday, February 16 at 1pm: Medicaid Day on the Hill.** Start inviting your friends to this event sponsored by the Utah Poverty Partnership.

For more information about any of these events please contact Bill Germundson, Ursula Hernandez, Elizabeth Matthews or Bill Tibbitts at Crossroads Urban Center, 364-7765.

**Holiday Party was a Wild Success!**

On the evening of December 16th we held a holiday party in conjunction with UHTA. There was even a visit from Santa Claus! Here are a few snapshots from the event:



**Left:** Joe Hudson and Billy McIlrath enjoy some time by the tree.

**Right:** Santa tells stories to a young AHAC supporter.



**Left:** Co-chair Darla Ball with Nikki Christensen.

**Quotations from Dan Smith:**

“Success at the material level can mean spiritual failure.” - Dane Rudhyar

“Freedom is something you assume. Then someone tries to take it away from you. The degree to which you resist is the degree that you are free.” - Utah Phillips



**Message from AHAC Board Co-Chair, Darla Ball:**

Bill Germundson and I went over to the Phillips apartments and met a single mother with two children who had to take money she had in savings for her children to be able to get her teeth fixed. With children or not, “we all need help.” We are continuing the battle for restored funding to dental and vision and need your help! We will have many chances to spend time at the state capitol this year, but we have set aside February 16 as Medicaid Day. More information to come!

**Announcements!**

**Flora Runigshield’s** birthday is January 9!

**Jackson Howe’s** birthday is January 10!

**Cassandra Conde’s** birthday is January 23!

Happy Birthday Flora, Jackson, and Cassandra!

**The Anti-Hunger Advocate** is a monthly newsletter of the Anti-Hunger Action Committee (AHAC).

**Our Mission:** The Anti-Hunger Action Committee is a membership organization composed of and led by food pantry clients and their friends.

-We unite many different kinds of people served by food pantries in order to increase community involvement of low income Utahns.

- We educate Salt Lake County residents about available resources and issues facing food pantry clients.

- We organize food pantry clients and their friends to take action on their own behalf.

- We promote solutions to problems that cause hunger and poverty in the lives of our members.

**Our Supporters:** AHAC receives funding from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the United Methodist Church’s Domestic Hunger and Poverty Program, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Hunger Grant Program, the United Church of Christ Hunger Action Fund, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger and the Crossroads Urban Center.

**Submissions:** To submit an item to the newsletter, please contact AHAC at Crossroads Urban Center, 364-7765.

Previous issues of the newsletter are available either at Crossroads, or online at: [www.crossroads-u-c.org](http://www.crossroads-u-c.org)